

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
November 16, 2016; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB or Board) teleconference was held on November 16, 2016. The agenda for this meeting is provided as Attachment A, a list of the participants is provided as Attachment B, and action items from the teleconference are included as Attachment C. The official certification of the minutes by the Chair or Vice-Chair is included as Attachment D.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTION

Dr. Dallas Wait, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lu-Ann Kleibacker, Alternate Designated Federal Official (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants and guests to the teleconference. Ms. Kristen LeBaron called the roll of the Board members and guests. The Board members briefly introduced themselves for those absent during the October teleconference.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES

Dr. Wait reminded the ELAB members that one of their responsibilities is to review each month's minutes to ensure that they are accurate. He noted that the date at the beginning of the October minutes should be changed to "October 19, 2016" and asked for additional comments. None of the members offered any. Mr. Michael Flournoy moved to accept the minutes; Dr. Mahesh Pujari seconded the motion. The Board members unanimously approved the October minutes, including the date change, with one abstention.

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO

Ms. Kleibacker did not have any remarks in Ms. Lara Phelps' absence.

TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

Dr. Wait reminded the ELAB members that topics for consideration may be introduced by the environmental laboratory community, at Agency request or through Board members.

Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objective Process

Dr. Henry Liebovitz reported that this topic is under discussion at the Agency, and the Task Group is on hiatus until further notice.

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Wait explained that the methods harmonization effort focused on elements of EPA methods that could be harmonized across several methods (e.g., calibration curves). The Board provided its harmonization recommendations to the Agency during the spring of 2016. ELAB received a detailed response from the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) on October 4, 2016.

Dr. Wait confirmed that the Board members had been able to review the FEM's response and asked for their comments.

Dr. Mike Delaney thought that the response acknowledged that methods harmonization is important but ultimately indicated that the Agency would not take action. Dr. Wait agreed, noting that EPA appeared to misunderstand the intent of the Board's recommendations. Ms. Patti Carvajal noted that because Ms. Phelps serves on the FEM, she may be able to provide clarification about the response.

Dr. Kim Anderson suggested that the Task Group communicate verbally with the FEM to decrease misunderstandings that can occur in written communication. Ms. Debra Waller agreed that written language sometimes does not convey intent.

Because Dr. Keri Hornbuckle was not serving on ELAB when the FEM wrote its original response on June 30, 2016, she recused herself from the conversation.

Ms. Sharon Mertens' understanding is that the Board had recommended that EPA develop a structure for future method development and updates to current methods, but based on its response, she did not think that the FEM understood this. Dr. Wait agreed, noting that the response appeared to indicate that ELAB had recommended an overhaul of EPA's current methods, which is not the case.

Dr. Leibovitz noted that ELAB had provided examples of specific opportunities for harmonization and acknowledged areas that could not be harmonized. The Agency's response, however, was generic. He would like EPA to provide specific responses to the Board's explicit recommendations.

Dr. Anderson reiterated the need to speak to the FEM in person, and Dr. Wait agreed, noting that the first step will be to seek clarification from Ms. Phelps.

In response to a question from a Board member, Dr. Wait explained that the topic initially was introduced by ELAB members approximately 2 years prior. Several Board members agreed that although it was not presented to ELAB specifically by the environmental laboratory community, many laboratories within the community have expressed a need for methods harmonization.

Ms. Mertens noted that this is not a new issue, and EPA addressed this issue in the 1990s, calling it "method streamlining." As a result, the Agency developed policies regarding the need for streamlining in those areas it would be appropriate and those in which it would not. Ms. Mertens will provide ELAB members with information about this effort and EPA's resulting commitments.

Dr. Wait will ensure that all of the Board members have all pertinent materials related to the methods harmonization effort, including the Board's 2016 recommendations to the FEM.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

Mr. Flournoy explained that the Task Group, which has a new member, still is waiting for EPA to provide a narrower scope. The group will meet once it has received the new scope.

Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)

Dr. Delaney explained that the Task Group had been formed approximately 1 year prior to recommend minimum SIM criteria. The Task Group presented these criteria at the Board's August 2016 face-to-face meeting. Two external experts provided additional comments, and Dr. Delaney provided the finalized criteria, which address these comments, to the ELAB members on November 9, 2016. He asked whether any members had additional questions or comments regarding the criteria. Mr. Flournoy thought that presenting the criteria would initiate the necessary conversation with the Agency. Dr. Leibovitz and Mr. Jeff Loewe agreed.

Dr. Delaney will finalize the letter that will accompany the proposed minimum criteria and provide it to the ELAB members. The Board will discuss the letter and criteria during its December meeting.

Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Testing

Dr. Wait explained that The NELAC Institute's (TNI) WET Expert Committee had developed a white paper and requested that ELAB endorse the paper. ELAB established a Task Group to explore this issue, and the Task Group developed a response. Given that new Board members have additional expertise in this area, the Board decided to wait to send its response until the new Board convened.

Ms. Waller indicated that she has comments from her supervisor about the WET test endpoints and concerns regarding codified state requirements that she will submit to Dr. Wait. The Task Group will discuss any additional comments it receives, revise the response as necessary, and present the response to the Board during its December meeting. Dr. Anderson will join the Task Group and be included in all future discussions.

Cyanide Methodology

Dr. Delaney explained that the initial focus of this effort will be on drinking water and the challenging positions that public water systems encounter with reporting requirements; low-level detects are of no public health consequence. Reporting limits vary depending on the method used by each laboratory. The lack of clarity in the Consumer Confidence Report requirements leads to uncertainty in dealing with detected contaminants. Also, sample preservation and treatment for minimizing interferences in testing for cyanide are problematic. The validation studies used to verify the method do not focus on preservation.

Dr. Delaney has engaged with the Standard Methods Joint Task Group on Cyanide, which has developed revisions to the cyanide section, and some members are interested in participating on ELAB's Task Group as guest experts. Currently, the Task Group includes Dr. Delaney, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carvajal, Dr. Leibovitz and Mr. Brad Meadows. If Dr. Delaney is interested, Mr. Flournoy can connect him with staff members from Eaton Analytical who have expertise in this area.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Dr. Pujari provided an overview of a prior ELAB effort involving polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) congeners that was focused on streamlining Method 1668, which is a complex and expensive method for laboratories to follow. After the Board approached the Agency regarding this issue, Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA) formed a committee, which includes Dr. Pujari, to develop a simplified method using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) and 40 to 50 congeners. Dr. Pujari reported that Mr. Hanley plans to provide an update at the TNI meeting in January 2017. Dr. Pujari is hopeful that after that meeting, ELAB will be able to review the simplified method.

In response to a question from an ELAB member, Dr. Wait clarified that the Board currently cannot take action on the PCB congener method, but ELAB may be able to comment on the developed method in the future.

Ms. Ann Bailey asked whether the method builds on Method 680 and whether the group had discussed a standardized list of PCB congeners analyzed by GC with electron capture detector (GC-ECD). Dr. Pujari responded that a short list of approximately 50 PCB congeners was developed as the focus of EPA's effort. Ms. Bailey commented that GC-ECD might be an options in certain situations (e.g., stormwater monitoring). Dr. Wait agreed that although GC-ECD has its limitations, it could provide a good deal of useful information.

Dr. Wait explained that a participant at the August face-to-face meeting had raised the issue of conflicting information about and approaches to using GC/MS spectral libraries, and ELAB had determined to wait until the new Board convened to determine whether to pursue this topic. Dr. Pujari added that the crux of this issue is that the current libraries are based on quadrupole technology, but technologies have advanced since the time that the libraries were established. Therefore, these new technologies must be considered.

Dr. Wait explained that if the Board chooses to address this topic, the Task Group will ensure that it is not duplicating any current efforts that may be under way. The next step then will be for the Task Group to determine the specific focus of the effort.

Ms. Carvajal asked who would receive the information from the Board regarding this effort. Dr. Wait responded that Ms. Phelps could advise ELAB, but the FEM would be the most likely recipient.

Dr. Pujari thought that the ELAB members should consider how to proceed regarding this effort and then discuss a potential plan during the Board's December meeting. He will research the topic and inform the Board members of his findings.

Ms. Carvajal explained that she had been contacted about Method 6010D because Section 11.3 states that "the laboratory must analyze an ICV and a CCV and CCB after every ten samples and at the end of the analysis batch run." The question is why an ICV (initial calibration verification) is required every 10 samples or whether it is an error on EPA's part.

After discussing the instruction and its conflicts, the Board members agreed that the punctuation in the sentence is the problem, and the intention is for laboratories to perform an ICV, and then

perform the CCV (continuing calibration verification) and CCB (continuing calibration blank) every 10 samples. No matter the intent, because it has been written as is, some accreditation bodies will require laboratories to perform it as written, which will result in laboratories performing unnecessary, repetitive analysis of the ICV.

Dr. Brian Buckley explained that he serves on the Inorganic Methods Working Group, which has not addressed this method that he is aware of. He wondered whether ELAB would present the issue to the working group. Ms. Carvajal wondered whether the working group reports to the FEM. The Board should ask Ms. Phelps about the appropriate Agency entity. Dr. Buckley explained that the Inorganic Methods Working Group has revised the SW-846 inorganic methods for changes such as this one. He thought that the working group would be the most direct route.

Ms. Carvajal will locate the latest version of Method 6010D and provide it to the Board members. The Board will ask Ms. Phelps how to best address this punctuation error. Dr. Buckley can consult with the Inorganic Methods Working Group if necessary. Mr. Flournoy can ask the American Council of Independent Laboratories if that group also thinks that this is a punctuation error.

Mr. Flournoy explained that the Independent Laboratories Institute (ILI) is working with EPA to develop language to add microwave technology and interference-resolving technology to Method 200.8. ILI would like to know whether ELAB is interested in reviewing the document after it is developed.

In response to a question, Ms. Waller explained that EPA is not able to combine SW-846 and drinking water methods; therefore, SW-846 methods that mention microwave technology cannot be added to Method 200.8.

In response to a question from a new Board member, Ms. Carvajal and Dr. Wait described a typical ELAB face-to-face meeting. The next face-to-face meeting is on Monday, January 23, 2017, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST in Houston, Texas. At the meeting, the Board will present its current efforts through a PowerPoint presentation, and there will be a good deal of audience participation.

WRAP-UP/SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Ms. LeBaron reviewed the action items identified during the meeting, which are included as Attachment C.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Waller moved to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Delaney seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
November 16, 2016; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST

Call to Order/Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Wait/LeBaron
Approval of Prior Minutes	Wait
Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO	Kleibacker
Updates on Current Topics	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objective Process: Leibovitz	
Methods Harmonization: Wait	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney	
Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing: Carvajal	
Cyanide Methodology: Delaney	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Wait
Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry Spectral Libraries	
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Wait/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Kleibacker /Wait

Attachment B

PARTICIPANTS LIST
Board Members

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait (Chair)	Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz (Vice-Chair)	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
N	Ms. Lara Phelps (DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Ms. Lu-Ann Kleibacker (Alternate DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Dr. Kim Anderson	Oregon State University Representing: Academia—Oregon State University
Y	Ms. Ann Bailey	EcoChem, Inc. Representing: EcoChem, Inc.
Y	Dr. Brian Buckley	Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute Representing: Academia and Laboratory—Rutgers
Y	Ms. Patricia (Patty) Carvajal	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Representing: MWRA
Y	Mr. Michael Flournoy	Eurofins Environment Testing USA Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories
Y	Dr. Keri Hornbuckle	The University of Iowa Representing: Academia—The University of Iowa
N	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
Y	Mr. Jeff Loewe	NiSource, Inc. Representing: Industry—NiSource, Inc.
Y	Mr. Brad Meadows	BSK Associates Representing: Commercial Laboratory—BSK Associates
Y	Ms. Sharon Mertens	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Representing: The NELAC Institute
Y	Dr. Mahesh Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies
Y	Mr. Elan Rieser	Con Edison Representing: Utility Water Act Group
Y	Ms. Debra Waller	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Representing: State Government—NJDEP

PARTICIPANTS LIST (CONT)
Contractors and Guests

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)

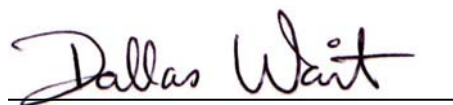
Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the October meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Ms. Mertens will provide ELAB members with information about a previous methods streamlining effort and EPA's resulting commitments.
3. Dr. Wait will ensure that all of the Board members have all pertinent materials related to the methods harmonization effort, including the Board's 2016 recommendations to the FEM.
4. Dr. Wait will obtain clarification from Ms. Phelps about the FEM's response on methods harmonization.
5. Dr. Delaney will finalize the current draft of the letter to the Agency that will accompany the proposed minimum SIM criteria and provide it to the ELAB members. The Board will discuss the SIM letter and criteria during its December meeting.
6. ELAB members will submit any comments regarding WET testing to Dr. Wait as soon as possible so that the Task Group can revise its response as necessary and present it to the Board during its December meeting.
7. If desired by Dr. Delaney, Mr. Flournoy will connect Dr. Delaney with staff members from Eaton Analytical who have expertise in cyanide methodology.
8. Dr. Pujari will explore the issue of GC/MS spectral libraries and report his findings to the Board at ELAB's December meeting.
9. Ms. Carvajal will locate the latest version of Method 6010D and provide it to the Board members.
10. The Board will ask Ms. Phelps how to best address the punctuation error in Section 11.3 of Method 6010D that may result in some laboratories performing unnecessary, repetitive analysis of the ICV.
11. During its December meeting, the Board will determine whether it will form a Task Group to review ILI's document regarding the addition of microwave and interference-resolving technologies to Method 200.8.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on November 16, 2016.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Dallas Wait", written over a horizontal line.

Signature, Chair

Dr. Dallas Wait

Print Name, Chair